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ABSTRACT

This report presents the views of the Advisory Council for Special Education Needs for Queensland, Australia concerning effective education for students with special educational needs in regular schools. Three issue areas are identified: (1) commitment and advocacy; (2) effective management of education; and (3) improved human resource development and planning. For each issue, principles are discussed and then related educational goals and objectives are presented. The principles include: access to and participation in an appropriate and effective education; family participation in schooling; advocacy for and active promotion of student rights; personal welfare of students; the right of participation and choice; effective school-based programs and services; staff professional development; programs and services based on negotiation; needs-based planning and accountability; commitment by each staff member; support for teachers; upgrading of professional competencies; recognition of staff development and expertise; systems-wide support; special education support services; program and resource development; and recognition of achievement. Objectives and strategies for change are presented in tabular form for each issue by organizational level (school level, school support center level, regional level, and central system level). A list of Council Members is attached. (DB)

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5

STRATEGIES for CHANGE

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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STRATEGIES for CHANGE

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN REGULAR SCHOOLS

Produced by Guidance and Counselling Services, 56 Little Edward Street, Spring Hill 4004
October 1990

Advisory Council
for Special Educational
Needs

Dr R. J. Andrews, MBE
Chairman

The Honourable P.J. Braddy , MLA
Minister for Education
Brisbane Q 4000

Dear Mr Braddy

I have pleasure in forwarding to you the Fifth Report of the Council. The report provides advice on one of the key concerns in schooling today – how to achieve appropriate provisions in regular schools for students with special educational needs. These are students with learning difficulties, adjustment problems and disabilities, or experiencing conditions or circumstances which significantly affect their learning and the outcomes they achieve from schooling. The report therefore addresses the special educational needs of a large proportion of the school population.

While the emphasis in the report is on how regular schools can better manage and support these students, it also strongly bears down on the roles and responsibilities of school support centres and regional and central system levels of organisation. It is the Council's view that this important challenge in education will only be effectively met when all levels of organisation in school systems are aware of and take up their roles and responsibilities. All levels of school systems must address the range of objectives set out in the report.

In submitting the report, the Council wishes to acknowledge the valuable contribution of its Research Officer, Dr Judith Smith.

Yours sincerely

R.J. Andrews

Please address all correspondence to The Secretary, Peter Kennedy, 72 Cornwall Street, Annerley Q 4103
Telephone (07) 896 5777, Fax (07) 391 6529

FOREWORD

I am very pleased to receive the Fifth Report of my Advisory Council for Special Educational Needs. The Report is concerned with strategies for ensuring that education systems are managed in ways that will provide effective education for all students with special educational needs attending regular schools. Its publication is timely as schools throughout the world examine their programs and provisions and engage in a process of renewal and change. An integral part of this process must be strategies for change which will benefit those students who have special needs.

The matters raised by the Council relate to ensuring:

- commitment to and advocacy for students with special educational needs by all members of our school communities
- appropriate management of education and provisions for these students
- human resource development and planning to ensure effective education programs and provisions.

In turn, schools must be supported in their goals by all organisational levels of our school systems.

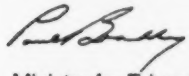
The advice is relevant to all staff of school systems, to the parents of students with special educational needs, and to the students themselves. I therefore invite interested organisations and individuals who wish to send responses to matters contained in the paper to write to:

The Secretariat
Advisory Council for Special Educational Needs
72 Cornwall Street
Annerley Q 4103

I have asked the Council to report to me on the issues raised.

I am confident that the matters raised in this Report and through the process of community discussion will materially contribute to the further extension of effective education for students with special educational needs, and assist the Government to meet the objective of social justice for all students in our schools.

Paul Braddy, MLA



Minister for Education

CONTENTS

Letter to the Minister	iii
Foreword	iv
Introduction	1
Part 1: Supporting students with special educational needs in regular schools	2
1. Context	2
2. Issues in the provision of education for students with special educational needs in regular schools	5
a. Commitment and advocacy	5
b. Effective management of education and provisions	7
c. Improved human resource development and planning	10
3. Support for regular schools in providing for students with special educational needs	11
Part 2: Strategies for change	15
1. Roles and responsibilities of each level of organisation in education systems	15
Membership of Fourth Council	24

INTRODUCTION

This report has the purpose of setting out the views of the Advisory Council for Special Educational Needs on how significant progress can be made in regular schools in making appropriate provisions for students with special educational needs. The general position of the Council is that the place to address special educational needs is at the school level.

In preparing the advice, Council reviewed current practices and developments and identified areas in which it considered important changes needed to be made. The issue areas which emerged were:

1. Commitment and advocacy
2. Effective management of education and provisions
3. Improved human resource development and planning.

The three issue areas are addressed in the report, first by discussion based on a series of principles which should underpin actions required and, second, by a series of core educational goals and objectives related to the issues.

The support provided by regular schools to students with special educational needs cannot be effective unless corresponding and supportive actions are taken at the other levels of school system organisation. Thus the report sets out illustrative objectives for each organisation level in addressing the issues and related educational goals. These objectives, if read across the seven core educational goals, comprise a portfolio of roles and responsibilities for each of the four levels of system organisation.

The report presents strategies for change from current approaches to support special needs students to a comprehensive and coordinated approach in which administrators, support staff, teachers and the school community together provide an educational experience which will better meet the requirements of the students, and will more effectively prepare them for adult life.

1

While the levels actually detailed are those relevant to the government school system, they can be transposed into the organisational structure of non-government systems to ensure all are addressed.

PART 1:

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN REGULAR SCHOOLS

1. Context

Changes in the management of education

The development of this advice by the Advisory Council of Special Educational Needs has occurred at a time of reappraisal and reorganisation of management in education in many countries. Schools today are expected to manage their students' learning, staffing and resourcing. Schools, supported by their school communities, are required to devise practical ways to make their programs more effective, and to use innovation to achieve desired changes. The emphasis is on whole-of-school solutions to agreed issues and problems.

The devolution of management to schools has been accompanied by new directions in the provision of special education services. In Queensland, provision for students with special educational needs is essentially a regular education responsibility. The role of special education is to support and extend regular education initiatives on behalf of students with special educational needs.

Each school must therefore develop policies, programs, organisational structures, and administrative arrangements to meet the needs of all students, including students with special educational needs. The concern of the Council is that all levels of organisation within education systems take positive action to guarantee these students an appropriate education. This report offers advice on ways each level of organisation can ensure this goal is achieved.

The opportunity to participate in education is a fundamental human right. There is strong evidence, both nationally and internationally, which shows that, almost without exception, students with special educational needs can learn effectively when they attend their local school with their family members and peers. This necessarily involves a broadening of school offerings to match their needs.

It has been demonstrated that the adaptations to school organisation and curriculum which follow 'and the enhanced professionalism of staff involved in providing for students with special educational needs' benefit all students. The recommendations outlined in this report relating to the strategies regular schools

2

should adopt in supporting students with special educational needs therefore have advantages for all students.

The provisions required by students with special educational needs

This paper is in the main concerned with education provisions for students with special educational needs. These are students who require assistance beyond that which can be provided by their regular classroom teachers if they are to receive an effective education. They require programs, services and other resources which are different from those provided for students in general because:

- the majority of these students have learning difficulties and require support, adaptation and modification of their classroom programs if they are to experience success.
- some display behavioural and adjustment difficulties. They need counselling and assistance with their social and personal problems
- students with disabilities require assistance through modification of the physical environment or access to personal and learning aids and resources. These provisions ensure quality of life for these students and assist them to participate in the varied contexts of school life.

Some students with special educational needs will need support in two or all three of these ways.

To underpin its advice, the Council has identified a vision for the future of students with special educational needs, and to guide broad directions in education provisions for them:

> Students with special educational needs must be assisted to lead fulfilling lives and participate as fully as they choose in the life of the community.

From this vision a mission evolves to inform decisions made in addressing this key area of education. The mission should guide the policies and management practices adopted at each level of organisation within education systems. The mission proposed is that:

> Education systems should strive to provide effective educational programs and related services for students with special educational needs in a caring and supportive school environment in their communities.

The changes referred to in management of education in general, and in special education provisions and services, have given rise to three critical issues which Council believes must be addressed if this mission for the education of students with special educational needs is to be achieved within regular schools. The Council has also identified principles it believes should underpin action in these areas. These issues are set out in Table 1 and are discussed in Section 2 on page 5.

TABLE 1 Supporting students with special educational needs in regular schools

Planning for the future

VISION: That students with special educational needs be assisted to lead fulfilling lives both at school and after they leave school, and to participate as fully as they choose in the life of the community.

MISSION: To provide effective education programs and related services for students with special educational needs in a caring and supportive school environment in their communities.

Critical issues modified	Principles	Some directions indicated
1.0 Commitment and advocacy	Access to and participation in an appropriate and effective education Family participation Active promotion of student rights	Legislation Commitment by all levels of education systems Involvement of families Advocacy
2.0 Effective management of education services and use of resources	Personal welfare of students Right of participation and choice Effective school-based programs and services Staff professional development Programs and services based on negotiation Needs-based planning and accountability	Community education School-centred management of students with special educational needs Negotiated planning/review processes for individual students Program, service, and resource development
3.0 Improved human resource development and planning	Commitment by each staff member Support for teachers Upgrading of professional competencies Recognition of staff development and expertise	Enhanced ability by staff to provide for individual students Improved collaborative and consultative approaches Support for, and development and recognition of staff expertise

2. Issues in the provision of education for students with special educational needs in regular schools

Critical issues to be resolved in the formulation of policies and practices appropriate in educational provisions for students with special educational needs considered in this paper are:

- an increased commitment to and advocacy for students with special educational needs
- more effective management of education services and use of resources
- improved human resource development and planning.

a. Issue: Commitment and advocacy

The community at large does not necessarily have a commitment to human rights. It is not possible therefore to rely on community goodwill or advocacy alone to achieve the required actions that would guarantee the recognition of the rights of all students to an adequate and effective education. This is particularly true in times of economic constraints and competing demands when some students may require access to supported programs or to special facilities or resources not required by others. Principles which are appropriate to addressing this issue are:

Access to and participation in an appropriate and effective education

Students, despite the difficulties they experience with aspects of learning or with personal problems or difficulties in their social relationships with others, are entitled to an appropriate and effective education in a school within their own community. There is strong support for this position in national and international legislation and literature.

Education systems have an obligation to foster the development of community acceptance of the responsibilities which schools must assume in the education of children, whatever their needs. In view of the lack of community responsiveness to this issue, the Advisory Council recommends:

- legislation which guarantees the rights of all students to an appropriate education.

This legislation is essential to ensure programs, services and resources are available on the basis of student need. Moreover, since there can be room for alternative interpretations of legislation:

- a set of basic principles should be included to guide the provision and evaluation of education programs and services. Guidelines should include criteria for prioritisation of services, and for evaluation and review procedures based on individual student need.

With the increasing devolution of management in education to schools, the legislation must include requirements that:

- all schools develop policies specifying their programs and provisions for students with special educational needs.

Provision to ensure the right of appeal at all levels of system organisation through the appointment of an education ombudsman to rule on unsettled issues is essential.

Family participation in schooling

Schools must create strong links with parents and caregivers and other family members, in particular the families of students with special needs. Parents and caregivers are the primary educators of their children.

- They have the right to be involved in the planning and review of the education programs of their children instead of merely receiving periodic reports on their children's progress.
- They must be invited to participate in decision-making and have access to all records relating to their children.

Links of this nature which are forged between home and school will benefit all parties within the school community.

Advocacy for and active promotion of student rights

Advocacy and active promotion of the rights of all students to participate in education is essential. Students and their families, school staff and the local community are partners in education. Yet there is often a significant lack of recognition by many in our society of the rights of students with special educational needs. Advocacy and community education must be provided to support legislation. Such action should seek to ensure commitment to responding to the needs of these students and of their families and their teachers.

With community participation in decision-making in schools it is essential that all who are involved in developing the policies and practices which direct the performance of schools will have a commitment to, understand, and actively promote the rights of all students.

- Decisions must be taken in consultation with people who have an understanding of the basic principles which relate to provision of appropriate education and services for students with special educational needs.
- The provision of an advocacy service and of community education are positive approaches in fostering community awareness and acceptance of the rights of all children to an appropriate education.

b. Issue: Effective management of education and provisions

The following principles have been identified by the Council as fundamental to the formulation of school-based policies and practices which guide the provision of schooling for students with special educational needs.

Personal welfare of students

The experiences of students with special educational needs must, throughout their schooling, ensure they maintain and strengthen their sense of personal identity and worth. Personal welfare is to be promoted in all aspects of schooling, and is fostered largely through attitudes and classroom practices.

The acknowledgment of this principle demands:

- acceptance and understanding of these students by their teachers
- sensitivity to and acceptance of the students by their peers
- the provision of staffing and administrative structures which provide for pastoral care and management for students with special needs
- effective classroom management procedures which meet the needs of individual students
- the delivery of appropriate education programs to cater for individual needs and interests.

The right of participation and choice

Students, whatever their difficulties, must be offered the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in schooling. Students need an appropriate environment for effective learning. Classroom management practices must take account of their capacity to learn and gain from programs shared with other students.

Acceptance of this principle brings the responsibility of ensuring:

- students' rights of access to programs and opportunities for personal choice are safeguarded
- the desire of students with special needs to be part of the school and broader community is respected and catered for
- schools invite students' active participation in the experiences which are the core of their classroom programs
- students have opportunities to experience success and accomplishment.

The provision of appropriate programs will necessarily involve schools in new directions including:

- course content, assessment approaches and organisation of courses
- timetabling arrangements
- approaches to organising teacher and student groups (e.g. contract systems, teaching teams)

- effective organisation of school support staff and resources.

These arrangements may include:

- providing alternative learning environments
- extended and different time frames over which education is undertaken by individual students.

If these circumstances are provided, the achievements of students with special needs will be commensurate with their potential for learning and their interests.

Effective school-based programs and services

The programs provided by schools must provide opportunities for all students to learn. The goals of education for students with special needs are not different from those of other students. They require access to the forms of knowledge, the learning processes, and skills required by all members of our society. The teaching these students receive will be a major determinant of how successful their placement in a regular school classroom will be. Effective education provision for them, however, may at times involve:

- access to a range of alternative teaching/learning strategies
- provision of special facilities, specialised resources, and technological aids
- an individualised education response to their developmental, personal, and social needs in a framework which guarantees their personal integrity.

Staff professional development

To provide appropriately for students with special needs, teachers and administrators must be adequately prepared for the task. Preservice education should provide a minimum level of specialised knowledge and teaching skills to assist students with special educational needs. Inservice education will provide opportunities for continuing professional development. This should focus on areas that directly help administrators and teachers meet the problems and demands arising in their responsibilities. There is strong evidence that inservice training should be:

- planned to a large extent at the school level to meet school-identified problems
- built around staff development and curriculum improvement
- provide opportunities for teachers to trial approaches and review their efforts in consultation with inservice team members.

School-based teacher development plans ensure appropriate activities are put in place by schools, and thus provide stronger incentives for teachers and other staff to participate.

Programs and services based on negotiation

Planning and provision for the education of students with special educational needs must be based on their individual circumstances. Negotiated planning and review for students with special needs should occur whenever a student requires a revised set of programs, services, and/or resources of a special kind.

The process of negotiated planning is designed to guarantee the student's educational requirements and progress are identified and reviewed regularly. It establishes appropriate learning objectives and the nature of the support required by all stakeholders in the process. It may include such elements as:

- the identification and prioritisation of programs and services by all significant participants (i.e. the student, parents or caregivers, classroom teachers, a representative of the school management team, special education support staff and parent-advocate if desired by a parent or caregiver)
- the development of program goals which are appropriate to the personal and social needs and interests of the student
- benchmarks for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the student's progress
- the form of practical support to be provided for the student, the parents or caregivers, and the classroom teachers
- the roles and contributions of specialist staff
- provision of special facilities, aids to learning, and technological support
- transport and other arrangements.

Needs-based planning and accountability

The above negotiation process also establishes a framework for ensuring accountability in the monitoring and review of provision of the services, facilities and resources required by students with special educational needs. It must be acknowledged that it is not possible to establish universal guidelines for provision and monitoring of services and resources for students with special educational needs. By the very nature of their difficulties, requirements vary from student to student, and over time for the same student. The standards for evaluation must therefore be needs-based and involve:

- qualitative measures of appropriateness and adequacy which apply as the first criteria of accountability for special support services
- quantifiable measures based on the assessment of cost-effective provision of services, facilities, and resources which take account of the needs of the students for whom provisions are made.

c. Issue: Improved human resource development and planning

The commitment, knowledge and considerable skills of staff members are essential if the mission proposed by the Council for the education of students with special educational needs is to be achieved. Principles appropriate to addressing this issue are as follows.

Commitment by each staff member

Regular classroom teachers are required to provide appropriate education programs for all students in their classrooms, including those with special educational needs. This involves a commitment by staff to:

- identification of the problems experienced by individual students and search for effective solutions
- provision of opportunities for students to learn which are based on acceptance of individual difference, appropriate classroom experiences and resources, and demonstrations of effective learning strategies
- resolution of problems in managing these students in classrooms.

Support for teachers

School management

Teachers need assistance to provide appropriate programs for students with special educational needs. The deployment of more classroom teachers to decrease class sizes by itself will not be sufficient. Teachers must be supported by school administrators and their peers as they respond to student needs. School management should:

- be involved in all decision-making in regard to the development of goals and plans for students with special educational needs
- encourage individual teachers and the school staff in their efforts to identify short-falls in their professional knowledge and skills and efforts to seek ways to increase their competencies
- reward teachers and groups of teachers for becoming more effective in responding to the needs of these students.

Collaborative and consultative support by specialist staff

Classroom teachers also require ready access to special education support staff who provide consultancy services, including demonstration of models of effective teaching practice. Special education support staff can also provide supplementary programs for these students and inservice education programs for teachers, parents, caregivers and administrators.

Upgrading of professional competencies

Teachers and other members of a school staff, including administrators, will benefit from involvement in professional development programs to improve their

knowledge and skills in respect to the management and education of students with special needs. It is important therefore that education systems encourage and reward the upgrading of the professional competencies of administrators, classroom teachers and other members of a school staff which assist in educating and managing students with special needs. The enhancement of classroom teacher competencies requires:

- support by administrators at all levels of education systems
- professional development opportunities and support to improve their classroom practices.

Specialist support staff also need access to ongoing professional development to reinforce and enhance their expertise and skills. The planning and development of such programs will often involve staff from other levels of education systems.

Recognition of staff development and expertise

Staff who exercise effective pastoral care, management and teaching skills in working with these students and who participate in inservice education for teachers and the community can be accorded recognition for their achievements in performance reviews and through provision of career pathways which reward attainment of high levels of competency.

To encapsulate its proposals for more effectively supporting students with special educational needs in regular schools, the Council has identified a number of the educational goals which relate to the three issues discussed in this section of the paper. The relationships between the critical issues and the core educational goals are noted in Table 2 and further elaborated in Part 2.

3. Support for regular schools in providing for students with special educational needs

In meeting the challenges posed by groups of students who need access to specialised programs, services and resources, regular schools must be supported and monitored in a variety of ways. Many of the outcomes for students are ultimately dependent on:

- the quality of the responses adopted at all levels of organisation in a school system
- the provision of effective and adequate support services and resources
- program and resource development.

Systems-wide support

Schools require support from all levels of organisation in education systems in their endeavours to cater for and support students with special needs. Regu-

lar schools must be assured of access to the specialist services, programs and resources which will assist them to meet this challenge. This will occur if efficient management procedures are put in place through the necessary planning, provision, monitoring and review of services and resources at all levels of systems organisation.

There is a need for education systems to:

- create working conditions in which a more appropriate staff mix is available to support students with special educational needs
- negotiate with higher education institutions to ensure teacher education courses both at preservice and inservice levels provide adequate preparation for administrators and classroom teachers to cater for students with special needs
- extend the knowledge and skills of newly graduated teachers and support them as they develop programs for students who need special assistance
- provide professional development for specialist support staff.

Special education support services

At a time when schools are required to take ownership of all students enrolled, including students with special educational needs, significant changes are occurring in the locus of special education services. In the past, programs, support services and resources have been largely provided for these students outside the regular school, or through their withdrawal from regular classrooms.

The focus for special education services is now directed to enhancing and extending the capacity of regular schools to provide programs and services. This includes supporting teachers of these students in the regular classroom. Special education provision therefore must be an integral part of regular education planning and management, and not a peripheral activity.

This change to a classroom focus requires an ongoing commitment by education systems to provide consistent long-term planning and funding for special support services to guarantee:

- adequate numbers of special education support staff are employed, with skills to provide the full range of consultancy and support options
- networking among specialist staff to provide support for their advocacy roles and ongoing professional development
- job satisfaction and opportunities for career advancement are facilitated with recognition of leadership and expertise of support staff
- appropriate levels of resources, facilities and services are available
- staffing and resources are on hand to respond efficiently to changing patterns of overall demand for support and to cater for students with low incidence disabilities who have very specialised needs.

Program and resource development

There is a lack of systematic curriculum development across the years from birth to the end of schooling to meet the requirements of students with special educational needs.

The years prior to school

There has been insufficient development of approaches for responding to the educational needs of children at risk in the early years prior to their entry to school. While many children are involved in experiences which embody the learning that will help them succeed at school, other children do not share such experiences.

These children miss the opportunities for natural learning that occur for many others during the spontaneous sharing occurring in family living. These experiences encourage the exploration of ways to communicate and share ideas, and involve social relationships, such as those arising during shared literacy experiences. During child-care, day-care, play groups and other community programs, models and resources can be provided for parents and caregivers so they too can enhance their children's learning and communication development as an integral part of day-to-day social experiences.

The years K-12

Program and resource development for students from their entry to school must include approaches to assist students with learning difficulties. These students should be involved in a range of experiences which assist them to become more effective learners. Most will benefit from the extension of programs within the framework of the regular curriculum. In particular, attention must be directed to the curriculum in areas including spoken and written language and mathematics.

Many students are not adequately catered for by the range of subjects currently available in secondary school studies programs. School studies available to these students must be challenging, relevant and fulfilling and not merely watered down versions of traditional academic programs.

Transition from school programs

Students with special educational needs also benefit from transition programs which, apart from emphasising student-relevant academic content, prepare them for the transition from school to adult life. Existing work-school and TAFE-school links need to be fostered and extended, and programs broadened to provide these students with work, life and leisure skills. Despite the recognition accorded to these issues in the Senior Schooling Curriculum much still needs to be done to ensure effective education for them.

The challenges facing senior school students with special educational needs are the same as those for all senior students. They require broadening and

focusing of their programs, based on age-appropriate experiences and resources, with community access providing an important basis for part of their learning. They must learn the functional skills required to succeed in a society which is experiencing sweeping economic and technological change.

For another, much smaller group of students who because of severe learning difficulties, may not be ready during their years of secondary education to move towards employment, life skills programs are essential. These programs must incorporate opportunities for them to participate in work experience and community access programs. Their schooling must prepare them for life and leisure, and provide them with a range of different learning experiences leading to supported or competitive employment.

In summary, to ensure continuity of curriculum, attention needs to be directed to program and resource development to provide:

- support for children and their parents and caregivers in the very early years, prior to school entry
- identification of appropriate strategies and resources for supporting students who experience difficulties in learning in various areas of the curriculum
- modifications to curriculum in basic areas including spoken and written language and mathematics for students with learning difficulties
- a broadening of school studies programs in the secondary school beyond traditional areas and recognition for these programs
- extension of programs focusing on the transition from school.

The development of these program initiatives will necessarily involve contributions from staff with specialist knowledge, and therefore will best evolve through a combination of school-based and systems initiatives.

Recognition of achievement

The extension of choice among studies in secondary school offered in Board-recognised subjects is essential to ensure recognition of achievement by many students with special educational needs. Students should have opportunities to undertake studies in areas which are not necessarily those required for entry to tertiary level studies. Recognition of their achievements need not be linked into procedures for entry to tertiary institutions, but should as a minimum provide performance indicators which the community and employers will accept as worthwhile and meaningful certification of achievement in areas which are important in work and leisure activities in the community.

For students with learning difficulties, the lack of recognition of their achievements, which may also result directly from inappropriate examination and assessment procedures, often creates major problems during their schooling and on entry to the workforce.

PART 2

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

1. Roles and responsibilities of each level of organisation in education systems

The above discussion establishes that appropriate education of students with special needs in regular schools requires school-level solutions to ensure the most effective provisions for these students. These actions alone, however, will not result in the most appropriate provisions for students. Planning and review strategies are required at all levels of system organisations to guarantee that emerging problems are identified and effective responses are made.

In the past, central level activities have been directed to policy development, long-term planning and determination of financial requirements. Central office responsibilities have also included review of policy implementation and the provision of statewide services requiring central coordination and development. Specific tasks have applied to regional and district levels of administration.

Devolution of management must ensure responsibilities in policy development, implementation and review, and financial planning are assumed by each level of organisation and lead to the achievement of goals for the education and provisions for students with special educational needs.

To reinforce this requirement and the nature of support for students with special educational needs that must emanate from all organisational levels of school systems, the core educational goals set out in Table 2 are considered in Table 3 as objectives which apply to schools, school support centres, regions and the central system level. These objectives are set out as portfolios of roles and responsibilities and are intended to illustrate how support for educating students with special needs may be provided.

The objectives can also be used as performance indicators for purposes of review to establish if each level of organisation is fulfilling the roles and responsibilities set out in the portfolios. It is emphasised that, although the portfolios are illustrative, the Council considers that without action being taken on the range of strategies, processes, and programs set out, the conditions necessary in regular schools for the provision of an appropriate education for students with special educational needs are unlikely to be realised.

While the portfolios have been detailed in terms of the organisational structures proposed for the Queensland Department of Education, Council recognises that structures within other education systems may be differently ordered.

Despite this, the objectives identified as crucial to the education of students with special educational needs remain unaltered, and should be translated by other systems into the relevant management framework so that the objectives are addressed.

TABLE 2 Supporting students with special educational needs in regular schools

Issues and Goals

Critical issues identified	Core educational goals
1.0 Commitment to and advocacy for students with special educational needs	1.1 Safeguard the rights of students to have access to effective education programs and related services
	1.2 Ensure commitment to the education of students with special educational needs
2.0 Effective management of education services and use of resources	2.1 Ensure the personal welfare of students
	2.2 Provide appropriate education programs for students with special educational needs
	2.3 Implement management processes which ensure appropriate education services for students with special educational needs
	2.4 Ensure flexible organisation of schools which supports students with special educational needs
3.0 Human resource development and planning	3.1 Provide effective management development of staff

TABLE 3

Portfolios of roles and responsibilities

Supporting students with special educational needs in the regular school

1.0 Critical issue: Commitment and advocacy

1.1 Goal: Safeguard the rights of students with special educational needs to have access to effective education programs and related services

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

Provision of school policies stating rights of students with special needs, and of their parents and caregivers, to access to school programs, staff, facilities and resources; including recognition of differential provision of services and resources for some students; students' rights of access to programs; students' rights to participate in the broad range of school activities.

Dissemination of school policy stating rights of students with special educational needs in the school to all members of the school community.

Procedures establishing school procedures to respond to and document appeals relating to the rights of students with special needs.

Participation of parent-advocates, on request, in all processes involving discussion of individual student needs.

School support centre level

Development of review and appeal procedures relating to the rights of students with special educational needs, and of their parents and caregivers as agents for their children.

Mediation of appeals by students and their parents and caregivers relating to access to school programs and provisions.

Regional level

Development of policies on regional level provisions for students with special educational needs.

Mediation in appeals relating to schools' responsibilities for students with special needs not settled at a school or school support centre level.

Processes to ensure identification of persistent difficulties arising in the implementation of legislation and related regulations for action by region and advice to central office.

Central system level

Seek legislation ensuring the right of all students to receive appropriate education programs in schools in their neighbourhood.

Regulations supporting legislation specifying the nature of appropriate programs and provisions to be provided for students with special educational needs.

Review processes ensuring that policies, provisions, and procedures are effective in responding to students with special needs and fulfilling regulatory requirements.

Regulations identifying processes for mediation and appeal procedures relating to rights of students with special educational needs.
Appointment of an education ombudsman to mediate unresolved disputes relating to rights of students to access to appropriate education programs and services, and of their parents and caregivers acting on their children's behalf.

TABLE 3

1.0 Critical Issue: Commitment and advocacy

1.2 Goal: Ensure commitment by community and education systems to the education of students with special educational needs

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

Strategies to foster school community awareness and understanding of students with special needs, e.g. inservice and community awareness programs; parent and expert speakers at school-based inservice programs and school community meetings.

Strategies to assist students with special educational needs and their families, e.g. parent-support groups, programs providing in-class or homework assistance for students with special needs provided by community volunteers.

Development of programs for students which enhance their awareness of the rights and needs of others, including those with special educational needs, e.g. literature units, self-concept programs.

Inclusion of at least one person with knowledge of social justice issues on school management committees and staff selection panels.

School support centre level

Initiatives which encourage community understanding of and support for rights and needs of students, e.g. parent networks, teacher networks, community network initiatives; local community programs; distribution of information; use of local media; involvement of parents as speakers.

Processes which create links with other professional groups/bodies to foster transdisciplinary exchange of information and initiatives, e.g. seminars, shared program initiatives, publications.

Strategies to link schools and employer bodies to foster understanding of and devise solutions to problems experienced by students with special needs in their daily lives, and on leaving school.

Advocacy training programs/register of advocates.

Funding support of school-based initiatives to enhance school community commitment.

Professional development and networking to maintain and enhance specialist staff advocacy roles through increasing staff knowledge of issues and procedures.

Regional level

Initiatives and funding to support school initiatives to inform community groups about issues and needs of students.

Initiatives and funding to support parent-advocacy training programs and expenses in provision of an advocacy service.

Strategies to foster wider community understanding of students with special educational needs, e.g. information disseminated through the media, distribution of information pamphlets. Joint departmental and community initiatives to foster acceptance, social justice, and in particular community commitment to education for students with special needs.

Central system level

Development and distribution of resources responsive to state-wide identified needs which create an understanding of and commitment to students with special educational needs, e.g. information networking, vocational outreach programs, use of multi-media approaches to inform community.

Funding to support initiatives at all levels of education systems, and to support community and school-based programs relating to social justice.

Development of curriculum which fosters student awareness and understanding of the rights and needs of all people, including those with impairments, e.g. units in Human Relationships Education and in Social Sciences.

TABLE 3

2.0 Critical issue: Effective management and provisions

2.1 Goal: Ensure the personal welfare of students with special educational needs

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

School policies which require acceptance and understanding of personal rights and commitment to an appropriate education for each student by all staff.

Arrangements which support teachers, parents and caregivers in the pastoral care of students with special needs, e.g. appointment and support of staff coordinators with responsibility for student welfare; establishment of out-of-class programs for students with behavioural adjustment difficulties; programs to assist parents/caregivers with managing their children's behaviour.

Initiatives which assist administrators, staff and parents and caregivers to manage and encourage acceptance of students with special needs e.g class- and school-based inservice programs.

Establishment of procedures to assist staff resolve problems in classroom management, e.g. support by administrators for teachers through demonstration of appropriate techniques and advice; teacher access to guidance staff to assist them to develop conflict-resolution skills, and through counselling.

Recognition through staff appraisement for efforts which foster effective care and management of students with special needs.

School support centre level

Assist schools in the development of policies, programs, and inservice initiatives to enhance care for and management of students with special needs.

Strategies to ensure availability of guidance staff to cluster schools.

Initiatives to maintain and extend the competencies of specialist staff to provide pastoral care.

Regional level

Processes which recognise, support and encourage the development of staff expertise in the identification and management of student welfare issues.

Policies and funding which ensure adequate specialised staff are available to assist students, teachers and administrators with the personal welfare needs of students.

Central system level

Provision of policies and funding to ensure adequate specialist staff are trained and available to meet student welfare needs.

Establishment of procedures to ensure the early identification of students with special educational needs to reduce problems arising from failure to identify and respond to students' personal, social, education, and health needs.

Development of career pathways which recognise staff achievements in effective management of student welfare.

Development of programs to enhance the ability of school staffs and families to care for and manage the problems of students with special needs.

20

TABLE 3

2.0 Critical issue: Effective management and provisions

2.2 Goal: Provide appropriate education programs for students with special educational needs

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

Initiatives to provide programs to students with special educational needs in which they will have opportunities to experience success, e.g. approaches encouraging alternative forms of identification of needs and achievement, and to monitoring student learning; programs encouraging a range of teaching/ learning of strategies, use of specialised resources and technological aids; modification of existing curriculum and content to support students' needs and interests; broadening the base of school subject offerings. Negotiated planning and review processes based on ascertainment of individual student needs and interests– identifying appropriate goals for programs and for monitoring and review - for all students with significant educational needs, including provisions needed to support the student.

Planning and review of classroom programs for students with special needs; including collaborative program development and implementation with support staff and in consultation with parents/care-givers; encouraging community support for classroom programs.

School-based initiatives to assist teachers, e.g. opportunities to visit exemplary programs, time for planning.

School support centre level

Support for school initiatives, e.g. through inservice development of curriculum adaptations for students with special educational needs.

Facilitation of inter-school links in development of curriculum initiatives.

Identification and fostering of programs for students with special educational needs that serve as models of excellence for other staff.

Regional level

Policies and funding to support initiatives in curriculum development, ensuring continuum of specialised education options within region.

Review of school-based program development, of individual responses to student needs, and school-based curriculum initiatives.

Identification of need for curriculum development for students with special educational needs.

Initiatives to promote employer and community acceptance of the value of a wide range of programs in providing students with worthwhile work and lifetime skills.

Initiatives encouraging the use of alternative contexts and time frames for schooling where appropriate to meet individual student needs.

Central system level

Ongoing research and development, and identification of overseas and local curriculum initiatives with potential to enhance the programs of students with special educational needs.

Development of a continuum of curriculum initiatives across years from birth to Year 12 to ensure appropriate and relevant programs with achievable goals are available for students with special educational needs, e.g. parent support programs from birth-school; appropriate programs to assist students indicating early learning difficulties; modification of curriculum in basic areas; broadening of programs in secondary schools; extension of transition from school-to-work programs.

Funding for and development of "light-house" projects demonstrating successful alternative approaches, content, teaching strategies and resources.

Development of career pathways which recognise staff achievements in providing effective programs and provisions for students with special needs.

Development of approaches for reporting student achievement in forms accepted by employers and the community, particularly on school exit.

TABLE 3

2.0 Critical Issue: Effective management and provisions

2.3 Goal: Implement management processes which ensure appropriate appropriate education services for students with special educational needs.

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

Processes and structures through which policy planning, program development and ongoing review regarding provisions for students with special needs including provision of staffing, facilities, and other resources.

Strategies that encourage staff, parent and community participation in identification and review of school services and resources to cater for students with special needs, e.g. a student needs committee with representation of key stakeholders; access by parents and caregivers to all records relating to their children.

Negotiated planning and review processes for individual student programs based on ascertainment of need : to establish priorities, monitor and review provision of staffing, facilities and resources, for all students with significant educational needs.

Processes which encourage participation by all stakeholders in planning and review processes relating to individual students, e.g. student; parents and caregivers; classroom teachers; representative of school management; special support staff; parent-advocate if desired by parent or caregiver.

School support centre level

Strategies to meet the demand for specialised services unavailable to schools on a regular basis, e.g. therapy support.

Strategies to ensure availability of staff and resources to schools with insufficient demands to require full-time services of special education staff, e.g. through a small school cluster approach.

Managing and funding for specialised aids and resources for students with low-incidence disabilities; monitoring and review of provisions.

Arranging and funding transport for students requiring this form of support.

Regional level

Policies and funding to ensure adequate support staffing in all relevant professions.

Review of schools' provisions for students with special educational needs.

Procedures for staffing and funding for students with low-incidence disabilities attending regular schools to ensure an appropriate response to their unique needs.

Strategies responsive to changing patterns of demand within local areas for provisions for students with special needs and their families.

Processes to promote collaboration among education systems in the education of students with special needs, e.g. joint program initiatives, sharing of limited resources such as therapists and specialist teachers and equipment.

Provision of data and projections to assist policy development and the future funding of facilities, staffing and resources.

Evaluation strategies ensuring a needs-based and cost effective funding and review of programs and services for students with special educational needs.

Coordination of interdepartmental and intersystemic policies and programs for students with special educational needs.

Central system levels

Planning supported by guaranteed funding arrangements to ensure provision of appropriate staffing, facilities, resources and transport for students with special educational needs.

Established criteria for prioritising provisions for students with special educational needs, based on longitudinal review of profiles of individual students' programs and services of staff, facilities, and other resources required for effective education.

Ongoing research and development, identification of overseas and local initiatives and funding measures for improving the range of provisions for students with special educational needs.

Across- system coordination of staffing and provisions for students with low-incidence impairments.

Policies and guidelines to ensure the provision of efficient, needs-based provision of programs and evaluation of management practices, including availability of staff, facilities and resources for students with special educational needs.

Interdepartmental cooperation on policies and planning for students with special needs.

Intersystemic initiatives in provisions for students with special educational needs.

TABLE 3

2.0 Critical issue: Effective management and provisions

2.4 Goal: Ensure flexible organisation of schools for students with special educational needs

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

Arrangements to support school-based initiatives for students with special needs, e.g. flexible time-tables, alternative programs, flexible organisation of teachers and classes, flexible groupings of students such as multi-age, or project or thematic class experiences.

Alternative organisation of programs, e.g. non-age criteria for entry to programs; offering of modular units, integrated studies and personal-choice projects.

Cooperative teaching approaches adopted by classroom teachers and special education support staff.

School support centre level

Support for administrators in developing flexible approaches to school organisation.

Processes/strategies to encourage use of alternative education contexts, e.g. TAFE-school, work-school, non-school based contexts.

Regional level

Policies which recognise and support flexible organisation of schools.

Processes/strategies that facilitate and support initiatives to create flexible time frames and duration of education programs and access for students to alternative education contexts.

Central system level

Policies and practices fostering responsiveness and initiatives at all organisational levels.

TABLE 3

3.0 Critical Issue: Improved human resource development and planning

3.1 Goal: Provide effective management and development of human resources

Organisational Levels and Objectives

School level

Strategies to facilitate and support the development of staff competencies in catering for students with special needs, e.g. in-class support for teachers, development of inservice programs, collaborative and team approaches, a school-level inservice training committee.

Performance review procedures which recognise competencies in assisting students with special educational needs.

School support centre level

Strategies which foster and support administrators' commitment to and knowledge of issues in the education of and provision for students with special educational needs, and assist them with in-school initiatives in these areas.

Assistance and funding to support school-based human resource development initiatives.

Support for professional development programs and networks to maintain and extend expertise of special support staff. Strategies for networking to foster professional links for support staff.

Regional level

Policies and guidelines for staff employment, appraisal and review which take account of the competencies required to cater for students with special educational needs.

Policies and funding allocations to encourage and support regional, cluster and school-based staff development initiatives.

Central system level

A cohesive human resources policy guaranteeing adequate levels of staff in all categories needed to support students with special needs, and to assist school staffs and families.

Negotiation with teacher education institutions to ensure preparation of teachers and other staff to participate effectively in the education and provision of services for students with special educational needs.

Planning and review processes to ensure regular review and renewal of school and system provisions for students with special educational needs.

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	Ms J. Landsberg ACROD Queensland Branch (from 3 April 1990)
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